

Missouri

Agriculture Prevailing Wage Survey



2012

Introduction

The 2012 Missouri Prevailing Wage Agriculture Survey was conducted by the Missouri Department of Economic Development's research arm, the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification. The purpose of this survey was to gather data to determine the prevailing wage paid to temporary workers in Missouri for different crops or livestock. This data will assist in implementing the federal H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program by determining prevailing wage rates in the agriculture sector and insuring that both U.S. and foreign workers receive equal pay.

This survey provides wage information for temporary migrant and/or seasonal agriculture workers based on input from agriculture operators across the state.

About the H-2A Prevailing Wage

For purposes of foreign labor certification, a prevailing wage is defined as the average wage paid to similarly employed workers in the requested occupation in the area of intended employment. Agricultural employers who anticipate a shortage of U.S. workers may file an application requesting temporary foreign agricultural labor certification. In order to establish the prevailing wage rate surveys are conducted for each agricultural crop activity in which certification is sought.

The H-2A program permits agricultural employers to apply for foreign workers (guest workers) to perform farm work of a seasonal or temporary nature. The H-2A program is designed to ensure employers a legal and adequate labor force while protecting the jobs and wages of U.S. workers.

Survey Method

Just over 1,800 agricultural operators in Missouri were sent the voluntary wage survey during July and August of 2012. Due to the lack of an existing comprehensive database covering agricultural businesses, MERIC created a custom database using the following resources:

- A sample drawn from the Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) database
- Previous H2A applications
- Agriculture associations
- Previous agriculture surveys
- Employer data in MERIC Workforce Information Database

A mail survey was sent to agriculture businesses during the month of July. Each establishment surveyed had the option of returning the completed form in a postal paid envelope or completing it online at a designated internet site.

Disclosure

Due to the Federal Privacy Act, it is prohibited by law from releasing any data which would divulge information that relates to any identifiable person, business or organization without the prior knowledge or written of that person, business or organization. Various confidentiality rules are applied to all data that are released or published to prevent the publication or disclosure of any information deemed confidential.

Survey Results

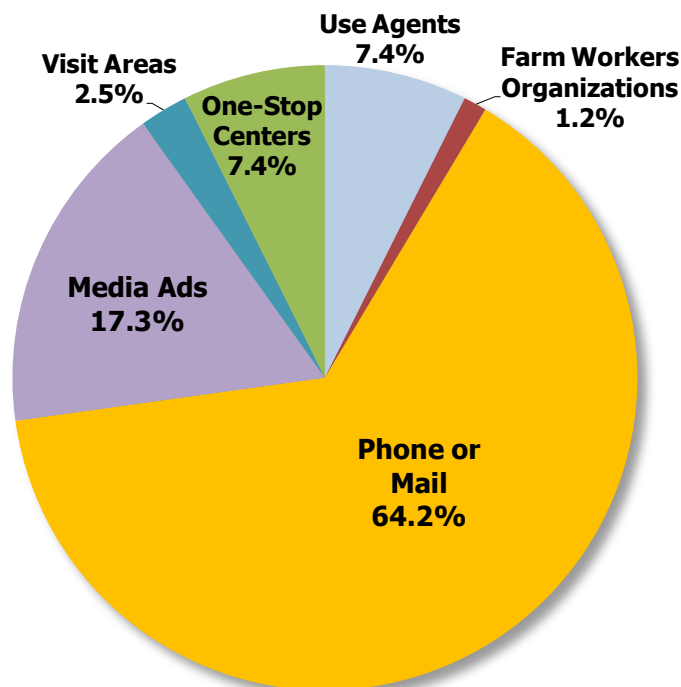
As of the end of August, MERIC received 254 completed surveys out of the 1,820 questionnaires mailed to agricultural operators in the state. Of those surveys sent, 203 were returned as undeliverable. The response rate of completed surveys to delivered surveys (1,617) is 15.7 percent.

From the completed survey results, 57 agricultural operators reported employing temporary migrant or seasonal farm workers and 3 of those said they participated in the H-2A Prevailing Wage Program.

Recruiting Workers

Missouri farmers use a variety of recruiting methods to find workers if they are needed on a temporary basis. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the farmers reported they contact former workers by phone or mail to recruit them. Seventeen (17%) recruit by placing ads in newspapers, etc., while an equal amount (7.4%) use One-Stop Career Centers or recruiting agents.

Method for Recruiting Temporary Workers



Temporary Workers by Crop

Survey respondents recorded the most temporary workers in the production of bedding plants. Cotton, trees, nursery plants, and apples round out the top five. Missouri farmers hire temporary workers for over thirty different crops and livestock jobs.

Crop	Temporary Workers	Crop	Temporary Workers
Bedding Plants	211	Grapes	43
Cotton	143	Soybeans	30
Trees	121	Corn	27
Nursery Plants	112	Pumpkins	27
Apples	65	Tomatoes	17
Multiple Crops	64	Weeding	13
Annuals	60	Sod	11
Shrubs	60	Wheat	11

Salaries Paid

Most Missouri temporary agriculture workers are paid by the hour for their work. The amount of money the workers are paid depends on the type of crop or livestock they are tending. Below are some of the lowest and highest average hourly rates.

Lowest Rate Per Hour per Crop/Livestock		Highest Rate Per Hour per Crop/Livestock	
Weeding	\$6.13	Corn	\$11.21
Peppers	\$7.00	Hay	\$11.33
Onions	\$7.00	Swine	\$11.50
Lettuce	\$7.00	Sod	\$11.75
Peas	\$7.50	Fescue Seed	\$12.00
Poultry	\$7.75	Melons	\$13.00

Temporary farm workers are not always paid an hourly rate. The type of crop or livestock and the employer may affect the method that workers are paid. For example, agricultural operators indicated different methods of payment for the following crops or livestock:

- Apples –paid per bin or per hour
- Grain – paid on commission
- Grapes – paid per pound or per hour
- Hay – paid per load or per hour
- Swine – per month or per hour

Tools and Equipment

Most agriculture employers (82%) who hire temporary workers provide tools, supplies, and equipment. Half (50%) of employers require that the seasonal workers be able to operate farm equipment.

Housing

Only eight employers (3%) in the survey who hired temporary laborers provided some type of housing for their workers. Six employers provided housing for single workers only. One provided for both single and family housing; one employer provided family housing only. From those employers who provided housing, three charged employees for utilities and one for rent. The remaining four provided housing at no charge.

Transportation

Since many of the temporary farm workers do not live close to their employer, transportation may be another benefit paid to the employees. From those responding to the survey, two employers reported providing transportation benefits to their workers; one provided a gas allowance and one wired money for transportation.

Appendix A – Rates of Pay

Crop/Livestock	Number Employed	Rate of Pay	Type of Pay
Multiple Crops	4	\$12.00	Per Hour
Multiple Crops	1	\$8.00	Per Hour
Multiple Crops	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Multiple Crops	1	\$12.00	Per Hour
Multiple Crops	3	\$9.00	NR
Multiple Crops	28	\$9.00	Per Hour
Multiple Crops	22	\$8.50	Per Hour
Multiple Crops	3	\$7.50	Per Hour
Annuals	60	NR	NR
Apples	40	\$8.00	Per Hour
Apples	25	\$18.00	Per Bin
Bedding Plants	3	\$8.00	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	3	\$8.00	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	1	\$8.50	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	1	\$9.00	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	2	\$9.00	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	1	\$8.00	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	10	\$8.00	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	23	\$9.50	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	1-2	\$7.25	Per Hour
Bedding Plants	160	\$9.00	Per Hour
Cattle	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Cattle	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Cattle	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Christmas Trees	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Corn	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Corn	1-2	\$8.25	Per Hour
Corn	1	\$8.75	Per Hour
Corn	4	\$10.00	Per Hour
Corn	2	\$13.00	Per Hour
Corn	1	\$14.00	Per Hour
Corn	4	\$13.00	Per Hour
Corn	1	\$9.00	Per Hour
Corn	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Corn	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Corn/Soybeans	2	\$12.00	NR
Corn/Soybeans	2	\$15.00	NR
Corn/Soybeans	2	\$7.00 - \$13.00	Per Hour
Corn/Soybeans	1	\$12.00	Per Hour

NR is Not Reported

Appendix A – Rates of Pay

Crop/Livestock	Number Employed	Rate of Pay	Type of Pay
Cotton	26-30	\$7.25 - \$8.00	NR
Cotton	72	\$7.25	Per Hour
Cotton	1-5	\$8.00	Per Hour
Cotton	5	\$8.00	Per Hour
Cotton	10	\$8.50	Per Hour
Cotton	1-5	\$9.00	Per Hour
Cotton	16	\$8.50	Per Hour
Cotton	3	\$10.00	Per Hour
Cotton	3	\$8.00	Per Hour
Fescue Seed	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Fruit & Vegetables	4	\$10.00	Per Hour
Garden Center	3	\$10.00	Per Hour
Grain	1	Commission	NR
Grapes	3	\$10.00	Per Hour
Grapes	4	\$9.00	Per Hour
Grapes	6-10	\$8.00	Per Hour
Grapes	6-10	\$0.10	Per Pound
Grapes	10	\$8.00	Per Hour
Grapes	1-5	\$10.00	Per Hour
Grapes	5	\$8.50	Per Hour
Grapes	2	\$10.00	Per Hour
Hay	2-4	\$0.80	Per Load
Hay	1	\$12.00	Per Hour
Hay	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Hay	2	\$10.00	Per Hour
Labor	1-2	\$10.00	Per Hour
Landscaping	1-2	\$10.00	Per Hour
Lettuce	2	\$7.00	Per Hour
Melon Harvest	10	\$13-\$15.00	Per Hour
Melon Packing	10	\$12.00	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	6	\$8.00	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	5	\$8.00	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	20	\$7.50	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	6	\$10.00	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	3-6	\$9.00	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	60	\$8.25	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	2	\$7.75	Per Hour
Nursery Plants	6	\$7.50	Per Hour
Onions	2	\$7.00	Per Hour
Peas	2	\$7.50	Per Hour
Peppers	2	\$7.00	Per Hour
Plants	5	\$10.00	Per Hour

NR is Not Reported

Appendix A – Rates of Pay

Crop/Livestock	Number Employed	Rate of Pay	Type of Pay
Poultry	4	\$7.75	Per Hour
Produce	3	\$8.00	Per Hour
Pumpkins	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Pumpkins/Hayrides	20-30	\$8.00	Per Hour
Rice	5	\$8.00	Per Hour
Seed	3	\$8.00	Per Hour
Shrubs	60	\$8.25	Per Hour
Sod	3	\$12.00	Per Hour
Sod	6-10	\$11.50	Per Hour
Soybeans	1	\$14.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	1-2	\$8.25	Per Hour
Soybeans	1	\$8.75	Per Hour
Soybeans	4	\$10.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	2	\$9.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	2	\$13.00	Per Hour
SoyBeans	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
SoyBeans	2	\$12.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	3	\$8.50	Per Hour
Soybeans	1	\$14.00	Per Hour
Soybeans	5	\$8.00	Per Hour
Soybeans/Wheat/Corn	1	\$38,000.00	Per Year
Swine	1	\$1,000.00	Per Month
Swine	4	\$12.00	Per Hour
Swine	5	\$11.00	Per Hour
Tomatoes	2	\$7.00	Per Hour
Tomatoes	15	\$9.50	Per Hour
Trees	50	\$10.00	Per Hour
Trees	60	\$8.25	Per Hour
Trees	3	\$12.00	Per Hour
Trees	6	\$9.00	Per Hour
Trees/Nursery Plants	2	\$13.00	Per Hour
Vegetables/Produce	2	\$8.60	Per Hour
Weed Chopping	10	\$4.00	Per Hour
Weeding Soybeans	3	\$8.25	Per Hour
Wheat	1-2	\$8.25	Per Hour
Wheat	1	\$8.75	Per Hour
Wheat	4	\$10.00	Per Hour
Wheat	2	\$13.00	Per Hour
Wheat	1	\$10.00	Per Hour
Other	1	\$8.00	Per Hour

Appendix B – Survey Letter

Dear Crop Grower/Livestock Handler:

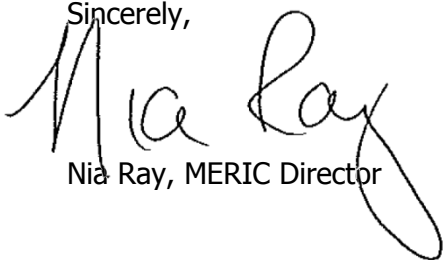
The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) is gathering data to determine the agricultural prevailing wage in Missouri.** Prevailing wage rates are used to ensure that farm workers receive equal pay. Completion of the attached survey will ensure the establishment of an accurate wage rate.

The information you supply is **confidential** and protected by the **Federal Privacy Act**. All information will be combined with that of other growers/handlers within Missouri to ensure individually identifiable information is not released. The survey answers should be based on your harvest or production season. If you are not within your harvest/production season, the survey should be completed based upon the last year's season.

Please return the completed survey within 14 days using the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed. If you would like to complete this survey online, please log on to our website at: <http://www.missourieconomy.org/form.html>. For assistance or additional information about this survey, please contact Sue Sieg, MERIC Prevailing Wage Project Contact, at sue.sieg@ded.mo.gov or 573-751-3635.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nia Ray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nia" and last name "Ray" clearly distinguishable.

Nia Ray, MERIC Director

***MERIC is the research unit for the Missouri Department of Economic Development. This survey is conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Division of Foreign Labor Certification.*

Missouri

Agriculture Prevailing Wage Survey

2012



MISSOURI ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTER
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT